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File-Fish Info

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ADEM expanding river fish testing

Pollution tests continues

Results of the Alabama Department of Environmental Management's first round of fish tissue testing since the department announced the expansion of its program last spring were announced Tuesday.

The results were reported to be encouraging.

Analyses of fish tissue from black crappie and several species of catfish and bass from the Mobile, Tensaw and Tombigbee rivers as well as from Weiss Lake in north Alabama showed that levels of pollutants in composites of fillets from two to five fish, as well as several individual fish, were "essentially at or near the level of detection," ADEM spokesman David Granger said.

"We are encouraged by the data," said E. John Williford, chief of ADEM's Field Operation Division, which collected and analyzed the fish. "The information," he said, "will, of course, be forwarded to the Department of Public Health and the Department of Conservation for their review."

Granger, meanwhile, said the fish analyzed for the report were collected in the fall of 1990 at three locations in Weiss Lake as well as one on the Tombigbee River, three on the Mobile River and one on the Tensaw. He said the samples were all analyzed for chlordane, DDT, dieldrin, dursban, endrin, heptachlor, mirex, toxaphene, PCBs and mercury.

Granger noted, "In April of this year, ADEM announced the expansion of its fish tissue sampling program over the next five years through a cooperative effort with DCNR (the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources) and the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)." He said further: "The program will encompass checks, on a rotating basis, of fish from 28 major lakes in the state, 26 stream locations and the 19 state lakes maintained by DCNR. Priorities for sampling locations have been developed by ADEM with input provided by DCNR on the degree of fishing activity."